

CLARETIAN BISHOP FIGHTS OFF BRAZILIAN ARMY

The world press has begun to take note of the courageous stand of Claretian bishop Pedro Casaldaliga and his associates against the repressive regime in Brazil.

According to the *New York Times*, Bishop Casaldaliga and other church leaders are fighting to defend Indians, rural workers, and squatters in the Amazon region against large landowners and agricultural companies.

Not many years ago, when the vast jungle territory appeared to have little value, pioneering Brazilians drifted in to dispossess the Indians and cut clearings for primitive agriculture.

Government attempts to develop the Amazon in recent years encouraged thousands of new migrants, but "the authorities were swamped by the migration and were unable to provide schools and basic needs, let alone jobs."

The state of Mato Grosso then sold the land to companies interested in stock breeding, paying little attention to the pioneers or the Indians who might be living on it.

Church leaders hope to unscramble the situation fairly for all. Their policy calls for a land reform program making land available to present residents while discouraging further migration until minimum facilities—sanitation, housing, schools—can be built.

Meanwhile, the *fazendeiros* (plantation owners) began calling on Brazil's army to evict the squatters.

Le Monde, the liberal daily newspaper published in Paris, reported that the "soldiers discovered a formidable enemy in the person of the bishop of São Felix, Dom Pedro Casaldaliga. A Catalan, he came to São Felix in 1970 and is a member of the so-called radical wing of the church.

"In only a few years he has managed to tackle some of the frontier's worst problems: prostitution, corruption of the Indians, eviction of the squatters, semi-enslavement of farm workers. In 1971 he issued a pastoral letter in which he suggested a "de-mythification" of private property. This was sufficient to spur the authorities to active vigilance.

"In 1973 his house was surrounded and searched. He and his staff—20 or so priests, nuns, and lay people—were questioned and some were beaten. The nuns' infirmary was declared illegal and replaced by a medical station; and teachers at the diocesan school were submitted to all kinds of threats and pressures.

"Dom Pedro answered by sending off reports to the São Paulo archdiocese spiced with this 'revolu-

tionary' slogan: 'How wonderful to be persecuted for the sake of the Gospel!'"

The police raids inspired folk songs in the region and a sort of nonviolent resistance sprang up, supported by the resources and moral authority of the church.

The army had to back off. In fact, the army's social services division started providing dentists, hygienists, and agricultural instructors, along with free fertilizer and tools to defuse the tension in the villages.

"The priests, however, remain a more effective presence . . . than the army," says *Le Monde*.

As for the 160,000 Indians of the Amazon region, a workable long-term policy is less clear. One approach, being followed with the Tapirape tribe, is to provide a permanent contact with civilization screened through a station provided by the National Indian Foundation, managed by three nuns and a French priest.

The station has protected the Tapirapes from alcohol and the demoralization that usually comes to primitive cultures on contact with white civilization. The nuns do not attempt to convert them to Christianity. Instead, being trained nurses, they help protect the Indians from succumbing to "white" diseases. The nuns also have curbed the traditional customs of letting old people die and killing offspring after the third child.

The tribe has been taught how to care for a community herd of cows, and to defend its land from neighboring plantations. Unlike many other tribes, the Tapirapes continue their traditional life and have grown in number from about 50 in 1949 to 120.

HIGHLIGHTS IN THE LIFE OF

ST. ANTHONY CLARET

TO THIS END THE POPES WROTE:

"Who will deny that he (Anthony) recognized the needs of his time and those of the future? Anthony zealously devoted his time and energy to editing and distributing free books and pamphlets from his own publishing house the *Libreria Religiosa*. He established many other projects throughout Cuba and Spain which prefigured Catholic Action almost identical to the form in which we have today." (Pius XII, Bull of Canonization, *Quos Spiritus Sanctus*)

"A great precursor of Catholic Action practically as it is known today. This great Modern Apostle anticipated and felt the need for an active apostolate in all its forms in which it is practiced today. He deemed all sacrifice no obstacle in establishing an editorial firm for books and circulars. He wanted the Catholic Press to reach everyone everywhere . . . He was a prolific writer." (Pius XI)

His writings include 145 books and 37 leaflets with 910 and 240 editions respectively; a sum total of eighteen million copies in all. While traveling through Spain as the Queen's confessor he brought along cases of books. . . . As an Archbishop in Cuba he gave 200,000 books as gifts.

THE ROMAN BREVIARY IN TURN SAYS:

He promoted the lay apostolate and Catholic Action ahead of his time. He established projects in social welfare. He was a resourceful and successful organizer of the lay apostolate.

CARDINALS, ARCHBISHOPS AND BISHOPS considered Claret most worthy of his title of "The Patron of the Lay Apostolate". Claret they felt was without equal in the apostolate of his time.

THE BISHOPS OF CUBA AND GUATEMALA chose him as their national patron for Catholic Action.

NOTEWORTHY INSTITUTIONS

FOUNDED BY CLARET

1. **Confraternities of the Immaculate Heart of Mary** — composed of clergy, lay men and women as parish core of Catholic Action. (1834)
2. **Marian Congregations** — among them the Claretian Fathers and the Claretian Sisters. Restored many others both in Spain and Cuba. (1841 - 1868)
3. **Religious Library** — Outstanding apostolate of Claret in Catholic Press. (1847)
4. **Daughters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary** — a secular institute. (1847)
5. **Society of Christian Doctrine** — not unlike our own Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. (1849 - 1870)
6. **Union of Friends of the Nation** — through which he worked out a practical apostolate for prisoners. Also a source of various agrarian reforms in Cuba. (1852)
7. **Credit Unions** — to benefit the faithful in their own parishes. (1854)
8. **Farms and Homes for Orphans and Poor Children** — its primary endeavor to give these unfortunate children a Christian and professional formation. (1854 - 1857)
9. **St. Michael's Academy** — an outstanding society of famous authors, artists and professional geniuses. (1858 - 1868)
10. **The Escorial** — its restoration beneficial to both laity and clergy. (1862)
11. **Established Parish Libraries.** (1859 - 1870)
12. **Holy Family Conferences** — dedicated to the relocation of immigrants. (1863 - 1870)

Claret walked in splendor without equal in all facets of Catholic Apostolate. The many and varied forms of his enterprises make up the First Chapter of Catholic Action.

December 24, 1807 — Born in Sallent, Province of Barcelona, Spain.

1813 Studied elementary school and Latin.

1820 Worker, and later assistant manager, at textile factory in Sallent, Igualada and Barcelona. Exercised the lay apostolate among the workers.

1829 Seminarian in Vich, member of a Marian Association and active apostle among workers, the sick and young men in general.

1829 - 1839 Very successful as a student of Philosophy and ecclesiastical science.

1835 Ordained a Priest.

1839 Administrator of the parish in Sallent.

1839 Novice — the Society of Jesus.

1840 - 1850 Apostolic Missionary in Catalonia and Canary Islands.

1847 Founded a secular institute (Religious at home).

1849 Founded the Claretian Fathers

1851 Archbishop of Santiago, Cuba and Patriarch of the West Indies.

1857 - 1868 Confessor and Counselor of Queen Isabella II of Spain.

1869 Member of the preparatory commissions for the First Vatican Ecumenical Council.

1869 - 1870 Father of the First Vatican Ecumenical Council.

October 24, 1870 — Died at Frontfroit in France.